

Tantalizing Turnips

Turnips (*Brassica rapa*, var. *rapa*) are hardy and easy to grow in Alaska. They are, however, susceptible to damage from root maggots. Plant early for summer eating. No special soil preparation is needed. A late planting in mid-July gives better turnips for winter storage. Thin while tops are still tender. These young turnips make excellent greens. After thinning, the turnips should have at least 4 inches of space between them in the row. Pull turnips when they reach 3 inches in diameter and before they turn woody.

Turnip greens and the round, underground "root" can be eaten. Like other Brassica family vegetables, they have a peppery flavor. The round, white or white and purple underground root, can be eaten raw like a carrot — roasted, mashed or in a stew.

In addition to vitamins and minerals, the greens are especially high in lutein and zeaxanthin, two phytonutrients that may help to prevent macular degeneration. The roots and greens are a source of glucosinolates, which may protect against some types of cancer.

Nutrition

Turnips: One cup of diced, boiled turnips contains approximately 33 calories, is high in vitamin C and is a good source of dietary fiber.

Turnip greens: One cup of cooked, boiled turnip greens contains approximately 29 calories, is high in vitamin A, vitamin C, folate and dietary fiber, and is a good source of calcium.

Storage

Turnips: Best stored at 32° to 35°F with high humidity. Leave at least 1 inch of stem on turnips and pack in slatted bins or crates lined with perforated plastic sheets. Turnips will store for 2 to 4 months in a cellar. For short-term storage, package turnips in perforated plastic bags and place in vegetable bin in refrigerator.

Turnip greens: Wash greens thoroughly and package in perforated plastic bags. Store in vegetable bin in refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

Freezing

Turnips: Select small to medium, firm turnips. Wash, pare and cut into ½-inch cubes. Blanch in boiling water for 2 minutes. Cool promptly in cold water and drain. Pack into containers, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

Turnip greens: Select young, tender green leaves. Wash thoroughly and cut off woody stems. Blanch greens in boiling water for 2 minutes. Cool promptly in cold water and drain. Pack into containers, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

Canning

Turnips: Wash turnips, scrubbing well. Pare and slice or dice. Place turnips in a saucepan, cover with boiling water and boil 5 minutes. Drain. Pack hot into hot jars, leaving 1 inch headspace. Add ½ teaspoon salt to pints or 1 teaspoon to quarts, if desired. Fill jars to 1 inch from top with boiling-hot cooking liquid. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Cover with hot lids and tighten screw band. Process in a dial gauge pressure canner at 11 pounds pressure or in a weighted gauge pressure canner at 10 pounds pressure: pints, 30 minutes; quarts, 35 minutes.

Turnip greens: Greens may be canned; however, freezing results in a better product. Leaves should be tender and attractive in color. Wash thoroughly in several changes of water. Cut out tough stems. Blanch 1 pound of greens at a time until wilted (3 to 5 minutes). Pack hot greens loosely into hot jars, leaving 1 inch head space. Add ¼ teaspoon salt to pints; ½ teaspoon to quarts, if desired. Fill jars to 1 inch from top with boiling water. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Cover with hot lid and tighten screw bands. Process in a dial gauge pressure canner at 11 pounds pressure or in a weighted

gauge pressure canner at 10 pounds pressure: pints, 70 minutes; quarts, 90 minutes.

Drying

Turnips: Choose firm, round turnips. Wash, remove tops and pare. Cut into slices $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Steam blanch 3 to 5 minutes. Dry at 130°F for 8 to 10 hours or until brittle. Pack into clean, dry container with tight-fitting lid. Use in soups or as a snack.

Turnip greens: Use only young tender leaves. Wash and trim very thoroughly. Steam blanch for 2 to 2½ minutes. Dry at 130°F for 8 to 10 hours or until crisp. Pack into clean, dry container with tight fitting lid. Use in soups and casseroles.

Recipes

Turnips and Ham Hocks

Christine Rogers

3 ham hocks, meaty and tender
12 turnips, golf-ball size, greens and root
1 green chili pepper, finely chopped
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sugar

Place ham hocks in a saucepan and cover with water and boil for 1 hour. Drain to remove excess salt. Barely cover with fresh water and simmer for 1½ hours more. Reserve liquid. Remove bones and cut meat into bite-sized pieces.

Wash greens and chop very fine. Barely cover greens with water, cover pan and cook for 1 hour over very low heat.

Pare turnips. Combine whole, pared turnips, ham pieces, reserved liquid, cooked greens, chili pepper and sugar. Liquid should not cover ingredients. Cover and simmer over very low heat for 1 hour. You can substitute bacon or ham for the ham hocks. Serves 2.

Turnips and Ham

(Lower in fat, calories, cholesterol and sodium)

12 turnips, golf-ball size, greens and roots
4 ounces low-sodium, smoked, lean ham, finely chopped
2 cups water
1 green chili pepper, finely chopped
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sugar

Wash greens and chop very fine. Barely cover greens with fresh water, cover pan and cook for 1 hour over very low heat.

Pare turnips. Combine whole, pared turnips, ham pieces, water, cooked greens, chili pepper and sugar. Liquid should not cover ingredients. Cover and simmer over low heat for 1 hour. Serves 2.

Per serving: calories, 121; fat, 3 g; cholesterol, 17 mg; vitamin A, 597 RE; vitamin C, 93 mg; calcium, 132 mg; dietary fiber, 3 g; sodium, 635 mg.

Turnip Tops and Smoked Ham Hocks

Betty Fletcher

3 ham hocks
1 bunch turnip greens, washed and coarsely chopped
1 medium onion, chopped
2 tablespoons sugar
salt, to taste
bacon drippings

Soak ham hocks in cold water overnight to remove excess salt. Pour off the water and add enough fresh cold water to cover. Bring to a boil and simmer for 2 hours.

Wash turnip tops several times. Chop coarsely and add to ham hocks along with one average size onion (cut up), 2 tablespoons sugar, salt to taste and bacon drippings (several tablespoons). Cover and cook the mixture over medium heat until the tops are tender, about 1 hour. Serves 2.

Turnip Tops and Smoked Ham

(Lower in fat, calories, cholesterol and sodium)

4 ounces low-sodium smoked lean ham
1 bunch turnip greens, washed and coarsely chopped
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons sugar
1 medium onion, diced
1 tablespoon canola oil
2 cups water

Combine all ingredients. Cover and cook the mixture over medium heat until the tops are tender, about 1 hour. Serves 2.

Per serving: calories, 265; fat, 11 g; cholesterol, 30 mg; vitamin A, 1584 RE; vitamin C, 96 mg; dietary fiber, 12 g; calcium, 415 mg; sodium, 635 mg.

Escalloped Turnips

Ann Severns

3 cups diced turnips
1 teaspoon sugar
2 cups water
5 tablespoons butter, divided
3 tablespoons flour

½ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon nutmeg
milk, as needed
½ cup crushed dry cereal
2 tablespoons grated cheese

Cook turnips in boiling salted and sugared water until tender. Drain and reserve liquid. Melt 3 tablespoons butter; stir in flour, salt and nutmeg. Add reserved liquid, stirring constantly (if less than 1½ cups, add milk to make full amount). Cook and stir over medium heat until sauce thickens. Combine with turnips in lightly oiled casserole. Combine cereal, 2 tablespoons melted butter and cheese; spread over turnip mixture. Bake in a moderately hot oven (350°F) until brown, about 25 minutes. Serves 6.

Escalloped Turnips

(Lower in fat, calories, cholesterol and sodium)

3 cups diced turnips
1 teaspoon sugar
2 cups water
3 tablespoons flour
½ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon nutmeg
milk, as needed
½ cup crushed corn flakes
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 tablespoons grated cheese

Cook turnips in boiling salted and sugared water until tender. Drain and reserve liquid. Cool liquid, then combine liquid (if less than 1½ cups, add milk to make full amount) salt, nutmeg and flour in a jar with a tight fitting lid. Shake vigorously until smooth. Cook and stir over medium heat until sauce thickens. Combine with turnips in lightly oiled casserole. Combine cereal, vegetable oil and cheese; spread over turnip mixture. Bake in a moderately hot oven (350°F) until brown, about 25 minutes. Serves 6.

Per serving: calories, 69; fat 3 g; cholesterol, 2.5 mg; vitamin C, 10 mg; dietary fiber, 2 g; sodium, 273 mg.

Quick Turnip Soup

U. S. Department of Agriculture

2 tablespoons finely chopped onion
2 tablespoons butter or margarine
2 tablespoons flour
1 quart hot milk
1 cup grated raw turnips
salt and pepper to taste

Cook the onion in the butter or margarine for a few minutes. Blend in the flour. Add the milk, turnips, salt and pepper. Cook about 10 minutes, stirring frequently until the turnips are tender. Serves 4.

Quick Turnip Soup

(Lower in fat, calories, cholesterol and sodium)

2 tablespoons finely chopped onion
1 teaspoon vegetable oil
2 tablespoons flour
1 quart one-percent milk
1 cup grated raw turnips
½ teaspoon salt and pepper to taste

Cook onions in the vegetable oil in a nonstick skillet for a few minutes. Wisk the flour with the milk until well combined. Stir all ingredients into skillet and cook about 10 minutes, stirring frequently until the turnips are tender. Serves 4.

Per serving: calories, 136; fat, 4 g; cholesterol, 10 mg; vitamin A, 144 RE; calcium, 312 mg; sodium, 409 mg.

Turnips With Pepper Sauce

Ann Severns

½ cup chopped onion
1 cup chopped green pepper
4 tablespoons margarine or vegetable oil
1 recipe white sauce
3 cups cooked turnips

Cook onion and green pepper in margarine until tender. Add white sauce and turnips and heat thoroughly. Serves 6.

White Sauce: Melt 2 tablespoons butter; add 2 tablespoons flour and blend thoroughly. When perfectly smooth and free from lumps, but not browned, add ½ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon white pepper. Gradually add 1 cup milk. Stir constantly over a low heat until the sauce boils. Cook 5 minutes.

Turnips With Pepper Sauce

(Lower in fat, calories, cholesterol and sodium)

½ cup chopped onion
1 cup chopped green pepper
1 teaspoon vegetable oil
1 recipe white sauce
3 cups cooked turnips

Cook onion and green pepper in vegetable oil until tender. Add white sauce and turnips and heat thoroughly. Serves 6.

White Sauce: In a small saucepan whisk together 1 cup one-percent milk, ½ teaspoon salt, ⅛ teaspoon white pepper, and 2 tablespoons flour. Cook, stirring constantly over medium heat, approximately 5 minutes.

Per serving: calories, 59; fat, 1.3 g; cholesterol, 1.6 mg; vitamin C, 32 mg; dietary fiber, 2.3 g; sodium, 254 mg.

Turnips O'Brien

U.S. Department of Agriculture

2 tablespoons butter, margarine or drippings
2 cups chopped cooked turnips
2 tablespoons chopped green or sweet red pepper
½ teaspoon salt
pepper if desired

Heat the butter, margarine or drippings in a large fry pan. Add vegetables, salt and pepper. Spread out the vegetables in the pan in a thin layer. Heat slowly, about 10 minutes, without stirring. Serves 4.

Turnips O'Brien

(Lower in fat, calories, cholesterol and sodium)

1 teaspoon vegetable oil
2 cups chopped cooked turnips
2 tablespoons chopped green pepper
½ teaspoon salt
pepper if desired

Heat the oil in a large nonstick fry pan. Add vegetables, salt and pepper. Spread out the vegetables in the pan in a thin layer. Heat slowly, about 10 minutes, without stirring. Serves 4.

Per serving: calories, 25; fat, 1.28 g; cholesterol, 0 mg; vitamin C, 13 mg; sodium, 330 mg.

Turnip Slaw

Ann Severns

3 cups grated raw turnips
⅓ cup sugar
⅓ cup cider vinegar
⅓ cup evaporated milk

Grate turnips and cover with dressing made by combining sugar, vinegar and canned milk or other cole slaw dressing. Serves 3.

Turnip Slaw

(Lower in fat, calories, cholesterol and sodium)

3 cups grated raw turnips
⅓ cup sugar
⅓ cup cider vinegar
⅓ cup evaporated skim milk

Grate turnips and cover with dressing made by combining sugar, vinegar and evaporated skim milk. Serves 3.

Per serving: calories, 147; fat, .2 g; cholesterol, 1 mg; vitamin C, 28 mg; calcium, 123 mg; dietary fiber, 2.3 g; sodium, 120 mg.

Baked Turnips

Ann Severns

2 cups pared, cubed turnips
1½ teaspoons sugar
¼ cup butter
⅓ cup water
1½ teaspoons salt

Pare turnips and cut into cubes. Place in baking dish with remaining ingredients. Cover tightly and bake in moderate oven (350° F) for about 1 hour or until tender. Serves 6.

Baked Turnips

(Lower in fat, calories, cholesterol and sodium)

2 cups pared, cubed turnips
1½ teaspoons sugar
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
⅓ cup water
¾ teaspoon salt

Pare turnips and cut into cubes. Place in baking dish with remaining ingredients. Cover tightly and bake in moderate oven (350° F) for about 1 hour or until tender. Serves 6.

Per serving: calories, 33; fat, 2.3 g; cholesterol, 0 mg; vitamin C, 6 mg; sodium, 304 mg.

www.uaf.edu/ces or 1-877-520-5211

Leslie Shallcross, Extension Faculty, Health, Home and Family Development. Originally prepared by Ellen Ayotte, former Extension Home Economist.



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